Course Description
This course is an introduction to the problems and practice of philosophy. We begin with some general considerations on the nature and relevance of philosophy. We will also familiarize ourselves with the basic tools of logical reasoning. Next, we will inquire into fundamental questions in the areas of epistemology and metaphysics, such as “What is knowledge?”, “Do we have free will?”, “What is the relationship between the mind and the body?”, and “Does God exist?” Our inquiry into these questions will involve examining both classic and contemporary readings.

Student Learning Outcomes
Successful completion of the course provides you with a foundational understanding of Western philosophical thought. In particular, you will be familiar with basic logical, epistemological, and metaphysical issues discussed in classic and contemporary literature. These outcomes will be measured through in-class quizzes, tests, and take-home essay assignments. By the end of the course, you will also know the basic elements of logic (e.g. recognizing arguments, argument forms, and using terms of appraisal) and be able to compose philosophical essays on topics such as the mind-body problem, the existence of God, and freedom of the will. Ideally, you will develop a coherent understanding of the nature philosophical inquiry and begin forming a philosophical perspective of your own. Since much of our time is spent on close textual analysis, you will also improve your reading comprehension skills and strengthen your abilities to construct logical arguments.

Learning Community
This philosophy course is linked with a First-Year Seminar to create a learning community. The seminar leader for this class is Prof. Hector Galvan.

Readings & Online Resources
All readings will be posted on Blackboard. Additional online material (syllabus, announcements, test review, etc.) will also be posted to Blackboard.

Attendance
Attendance will be monitored. Any student who misses more than three classes without a reasonable excuse (e.g. medical) can expect to be penalized (up to a letter grade) on their final grade. All materials discussed in lectures and covered in the readings are the potential basis for quiz and test questions. Students are therefore expected to attend all lectures and keep up with assigned readings. If you don’t attend class, don’t expect to pass.
Requirements

1. Statement of Philosophical Views I, January 16
   Description: Provide a brief synopsis of your philosophical views. Further instructions will be provided in class.
   
   Percentage of Final Mark
   Worth 5%

2. Ten reading quizzes
   Description: Short quizzes held at the start of class, usually answerable in a word or sentence.
   
   Percentage of Final Mark
   Worth 20%

4. In class test, February 28
   Description: General test consisting of some true/false, multiple choice, short and long answer questions. It will cover all materials up to and including February 26.
   
   Percentage of Final Mark
   Worth 15%

5. Essay, March 28
   Description: Essay topic and specific instructions will be distributed in class.
   
   Percentage of Final Mark
   Worth 15%

6. In class test, during the exam period (date and time TBA)
   Description: General test with the same structure as the first test. Will cover all materials after the second test up to and including
   
   Percentage of Final Mark
   Worth 20%

7. Statement of Philosophical Views II, April 30
   Description: Essay topics and specific instructions for this essay to be distributed in class.
   
   Percentage of Final Mark
   Worth 5%

8. First-Year Learning Community Assignments
   Description: Consult the FYLC syllabus provided by your seminar professor.
   
   Percentage of Final Mark
   Worth 20%

Grading Scale
All grades will be assigned on the standard scale: 90%-100%=A, 80%-89%=B, 70%-79%=C, 60%-69%=D, 59% and below=F.

Missed Test Policy
Students unable to write a test for a medical reason must provide a doctor’s note. If a student is unable to write a test for a similarly serious reason, documentation may be required. Make-up tests will be written at an arranged time under my supervision.

Classroom Etiquette
Philosophy is conversational. Feel free to ask any question about the readings or the topics we are discussing. If you did not understand something, you will be doing your colleagues and yourself a service if you ask for clarification. You are also free to argue for any philosophical position you find compelling as long as you provide reasons for your point of view. It is inevitable that during discussions individual points of view will differ. When they do, our reaction will always be to patiently listen to the reasons offered for a particular conclusion and cooperatively evaluate those reasons.

E-etiquette
*Turn off all cell phones before entering the classroom.* A student who disrupts a lecture by using a personal electronic device will be asked to leave.
Disabilities Accommodations
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Academic Advising
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Dropping a Class
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

Grade Appeals
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a grade of F.
The Fine Print
For all other matters concerning course withdrawal, appeal of grades, academic misconduct, etc., students are strongly advised to consult the rules outlined in the Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Student Handbook and on the web at: http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/.

Important Dates
January 14  Classes begin Regular Spring and 1st 7-Week Session
January 21  Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
March 11-15  Spring Break
March 18  First Day of Classes 2nd 7-Week session
March 20  Grades due for 1st 7-Week session
April 5  Last day to drop a class
April 30  Last day to withdraw from the University
May 2  Reading Day
May 3, 6-9  Final examinations

TOPICS AND READINGS
*Readings and schedule subject to change

Week 1 (Jan. 15, 17):  What is Philosophy? & Logic
Readings: (1) Blackburn, Think, “Introduction”; (2) Tennant, “The Main Features of Philosophy”; (3) Tennant, “Philosophy’s History and Legacy”.

Week 2 (Jan. 22, 24):  What is Philosophy? & Logic
Readings: (1) Tennant, “The Philosophical Temperament”; (2) Russell, “The Value of Philosophy”

Week 3 (Jan. 29, 31):  Epistemology & Logic
Readings: (1) Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy I-III

Week 4 (Feb. 5, 7):  Epistemology & Logic
Readings: (1) Gettier, “Is Justified True Belief Knowledge?”; (2) Peirce, “The Fixation of Belief”

Week 5 (Feb. 12, 14):  Mind & Body
Readings: (1) Plato, excerpt from “Alcibiades I”; (2) Searle, “A Dozen Problems in the Philosophy of Mind”.

Week 6 (Feb. 19, 21):  Mind & Body
Readings: (1) Churchland, “A Critique of Dualism”; (2) Jackson, “Epiphenomenal Qualia”.
Week 7 (Feb. 26, 28): General Review & Test 1
No Readings

Week 8 (Mar. 5, 7): Free Will

Week 9 (Mar. 19, 21): Free Will

Week 10 (Mar. 26, 28): Personal Identity
Readings: (1) Crumley, “Personal Identity”.

Week 11 (Apr. 2, 4): The Existence of God

Week 12 (Apr. 9, 11): The Existence of God
Readings: (1) Behe, “Molecular Machines: Experimental Support for the Design Inference”; (3) Kitcher, “Born-Again Creationism”.

Week 13 (Apr. 16, 18): The Existence of God
Readings: (1) Clifford, “The Ethics of Belief”; (2) James, “The Will to Believe”.

Week 14 (Apr. 23, 25): The Existence of God
Readings: (1) Mackie, “Evil and Omnipotence”; (2) Swinburne, “Why God Allows Evil”.

Week 15 (Apr. 30): General Review

*Test 2 to be held during the exam period. Date and time TBA.